



Clara Becka, Age 13, Grade 8
Parras Middle School
Redondo Beach, CA

Dear E.L. Konigsburg,

I originally chose your book, *The View From Saturday*, because I liked the cover art. I was looking for something interesting to read, and this book just happened to catch my eye.

I remember the day very distinctly, as this is my favorite book by far. It was a stifling, lethargic Saturday afternoon, and I was at the public library, volunteering like I do most summers. I came across *The View From Saturday* on the shelving cart and slipped away to a back corner to read. Before I knew it, my shift was over and I was already on the fourth chapter.

“Whichever way it began—chicken-or-egg, team-or-The-Souls—it definitely ended with an egg. Definitely, an egg.” This quote put life in a whole new perspective for me. It doesn’t matter how something began, it doesn’t matter if you got off on the wrong foot with someone or if you just really didn’t get along, it’s still a new beginning, a chance to make a new friend.

I tried to keep this philosophy in mind when my mom and I moved from Texas to California this summer, and so far I’ve made some really good friends here. At first I was scared, scared that I wouldn’t fit in with kids here, like I was too different, like *they* were too different. Then I thought of how Noah, Julian, Nadia, and Ethan were totally different, but when they gave each other a chance they became really good friends. I was also reminded of the compassion they showed for each other and Mrs. Olinski. This made me realize that maybe we’re all really not that different from each other, and if we would just give people a chance that we would realize that we may have enough love in our hearts for everyone, and just not know it.

Immediately after finishing the book, I went out and bought a copy, just so I could read it all over again. And even though it’s below my reading level, I still read *The View From Saturday* from time to time. This book just really connected for me. It makes me think about some of the decisions I make, and really about the way I live my life all together. I feel like I’m a better person because of it. Thank you for that.

My name is Clara, and I am a recent transplant to California from Texas. Though I am an only child, I come from a very large family since my Mom is one of ten siblings. She has always stressed to me the importance of getting a good education, and got me hooked on books since before I could read for myself. Books can be a great escape. I’d like to thank all the great

authors out there who shared their imaginations with us. I hope to myself become a published author someday soon.

L E V E L T W O



Jordan Borg, Age 12, Grade 7
Wilma Cavitt Junior High School
Granite Bay, CA

Dear Natasha Friend,

Thank you so very much for bringing the book *Perfect* into this world, because not only myself, but also many other girls my age could really use the messages it portrays. Before I read your story, I felt very insecure about myself because I am a little bit bigger than most of the “twigs” that are my friends. Plus, I entered junior high this year and it is very hard for me to adjust to the many changes, without having that feeling that I need to be perfect. A lot of girls that I know are like Ashley, in your story, and just appeal to me and many other kids as a flawless, beautiful, perfect, and smart human being. When I’m up against them, I feel like I am a little microscopic insect with no life, waiting to get squished by one of their expensive shoes. Reading *Perfect* helped me overcome feeling like an insect, and I’m thankful for it. The other important message that I received from reading *Perfect* is that it is better to be yourself than trying hard to be someone else. In the section of *Perfect* where Isabelle, the main character, goes shopping with Ashley and buys hundreds of dollars worth of expensive clothes, it reminded me of the experience I went through a few months ago about clothes shopping for school. I felt like I was going to die because I thought I didn’t have the right clothes for school. So I fell for the voice inside my head and went shopping for the expensive clothes that would supposedly make me look better. Now looking back on that, I see that it was a poor decision because I have friends who like me for who I am, not the way I dress. *Perfect* helped me realize that I am just as good as any of those girls who appear to be super-human, and that I don’t have to be very skinny or have the right clothes to lead a good social life, and have a successful school year. Now I feel so much better about myself and have so much more self-esteem. Today I look in the mirror and see a beautiful girl rather than some monster or something ugly. When I picked up this wonderful novel, I read it because it sounded like a very interesting book. Now that I have finished *Perfect*, I realize (apart from it being an excellent story) that it actually helped me deal with the small problems I was facing about what I thought of my overall body image.